Skeena Region

Management Direction Statement

November 2003

for Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park (Hook (Deep) Bay, Pierre Creek, Pinkut Creek and Sandpoint sites)

British Columbia

Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
Environmental Stewardship Division

Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park (Hook (Deep) Bay, Pierre Creek, Pinkut Creek and Sandpoint sites)

Approvals Page

Forward

This management direction statement for Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park provides management direction until Environmental Stewardship Division revises the plan or prepares a more detailed management plan. Ongoing consultation between Environmental Stewardship Division and First Nations may require changes to this management direction statement. Aboriginal traditional activities and uses are honoured and respected within the park.

Implementation of strategies identified in the management direction statement (MDS) will be dependent on available funding and Environmental Stewardship Division priorities.

Approvals

Regional Manager
Skeena Region
Environmental Stewardship Division

A/ Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

Environmental Stewardship Division developed this management direction statement through direction received from the Lakes District Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP)

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Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park (Hook (Deep) Bay, Pierre Creek, Pinkut Creek and Sandpoint sites)

Management Direction Statement

Introduction

Purpose of the Management Direction Statement

Management direction statements (MDS) provide strategic management direction for protected areas that do not have an approved management plan. Management direction statements describe protected area values, management issues and concerns, a management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies, and direction from other planning processes. While the MDS identifies strategies, the completion of all these strategies is dependent on funding and funding procedures. All development associated with these strategies is subject to the BC Parks and Protected Areas Impact Assessment Process.

Context

The provincial government established six sites comprising Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park beginning with Pendleton Bay Site protected in May 1993 by Order in Council #681/1993 and Smithers Landing Site protected in June 1993 by Order in Council #789/1993 under the *Park Act*. The Lakes District Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) recommended four new small lake-oriented sites to government in 1999. These sites included Sandpoint, Pierre Creek, Hook (Deep) Bay, and Pinkut Creek. The provincial government established these sites under the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* in April 2001. These sites are presently named and described in Schedule C of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*. The LRMP identified the four new sites as Goal 2, special feature sites in recognition of their outdoor recreation and cultural heritage values.

This management direction statement provides management direction for the four new sites making up Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park. The four sites total about 333 hectares along the Babine Lake shoreline. Babine Lake is located about 30 kilometres north of the community of Burns Lake that has an area population of around 4,000 people. Most sites are reached by boat access from Babine Lake. A logging road provides access to Pinkut Creek Site.

Pendleton Bay Site is the hub for the east part of Babine Lake. Hook (Deep) Bay Site sits on the north shore of Babine Lake, about four kilometres north of Pendleton Bay Site. Pierre Creek Site fronts the south shore of Babine Lake, about 15 kilometres northwest of Pendleton Bay Site. Sandpoint Site is located another five kilometres northwest of Pierre Creek Site, but on the north shore of Babine Lake. Pinkut Creek Site lies about 16 kilometres southeast of Pendleton Bay Site, on the south shore of Babine Lake (See Figure 1). Finally, Smithers Landing Site occupies the west shore of Babine Lake, 66 kilometres northeast of Smithers.

These six small provincial marine park sites lie within the asserted traditional territory of the Nat'oot'en Nation, the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, and the Yekooche First Nation.

The six provincial marine park sites provide boat anchorages, scenic lakeshore viewscapes, beaches and fish-bearing creeks. In addition, the park sites provide visitors access to Babine Lake's internationally-significant fishing opportunities, consisting of about 200 kilometres of waterways on the longest natural lake entirely within British Columbia. These six provincial marine park sites are part of the Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park system.

Several other protected areas exist along Babine Lake and next to Nilkitkwa Lake. Sutherland River Provincial Park and Sutherland River Protected Area cover 18,394 hectares (13,559 hectares is Class A provincial park) at the east end of Babine Lake. Topley Provincial Park contains 12 hectares of land on the south shore of Babine Lake, about 40 kilometres north of Topley. Red Bluff Provincial Park protects 148 hectares on the south shore of Babine Lake, about 10 kilometres south of Topley Landing. Nilkitwa Lake Provincial Park consists of two parcels of land about three kilometres apart, each within a bay of protected anchorage and gentle beaches. Water flows north through Nilkitwa Lake from Babine Lake and on to the Babine River. Rainbow Alley Provincial Park protects 110 hectares between Nilkitkwa Lake and Babine Lake.

Sutherland River Provincial Park and Protected Area conserves adjacent parcels of land along approximately 50 kilometres of the Sutherland River and Babine Lake. The park and protected area provide visitors with a variety of river-based outdoor recreation opportunities and preserve a river environment with important habitat for spawning fish and other wildlife species.

Babine River Corridor Provincial Park protects a narrow river corridor stretching west 85 kilometres downstream from the end of Nilkitwa Lake. Along with protecting significant wildlife habitat, Babine River Corridor Provincial Park provides outstanding wilderness river recreation opportunities. Internationally significant angling opportunities for steelhead and sockeye salmon attract local and international visitors alike. Also, Babine River Corridor Provincial Park presents internationally significant rafting and kayaking opportunities with 30 kilometres of Class III and IV rapids.

Ethel F. Wilson Memorial Park offers opportunities for community provision of rustic camping and access to angling on Pinkut Lake, 10 kilometres to the south of Pendleton Bay Site.

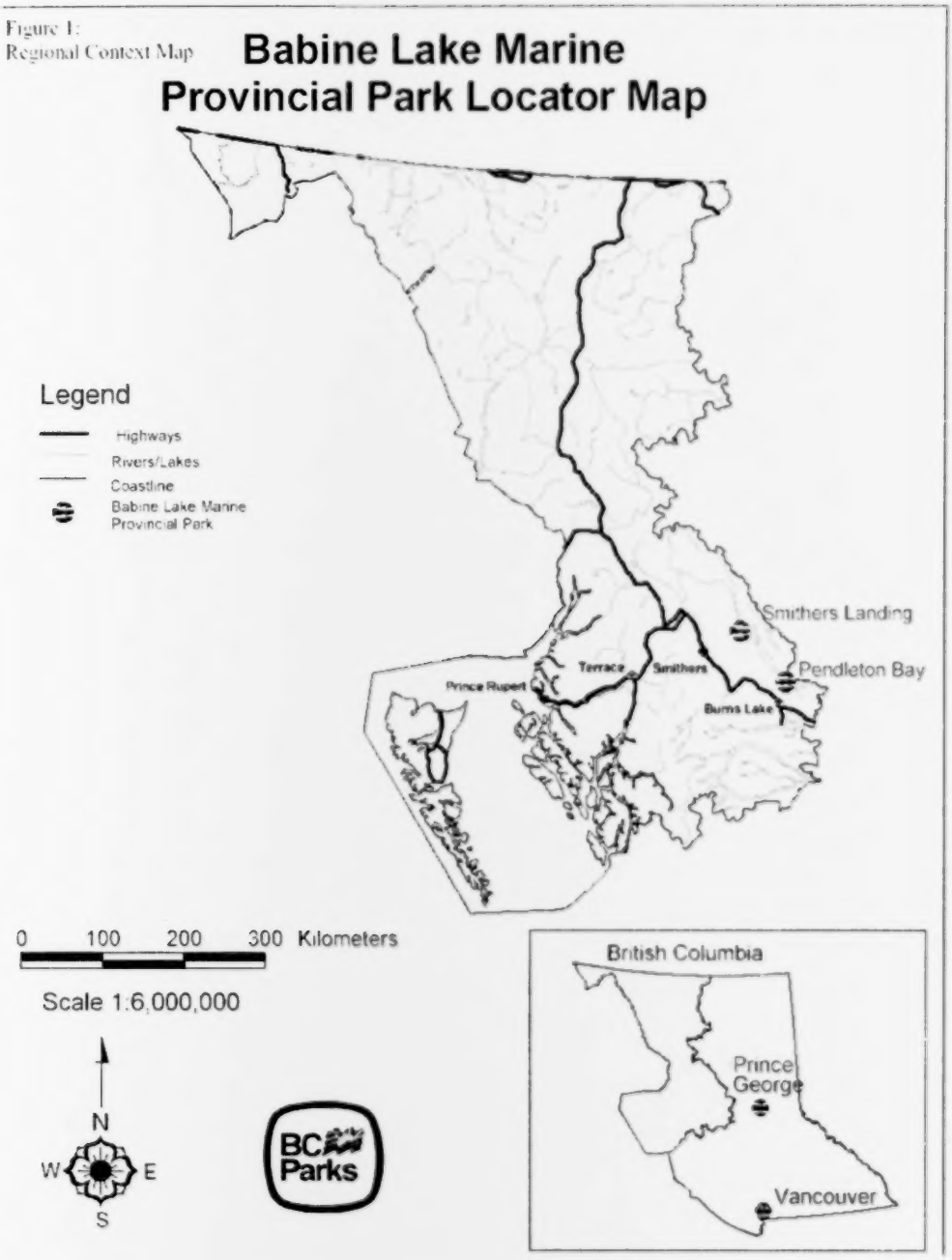
Provincial Park Attributes

Conservation

The following ecosection and biogeoclimatic zone information applies to the six (6) sites in Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park:

- Protects a very small area of the under-represented Babine Upland Ecosection. Currently only 4% of the Babine Upland Ecosection is included in the protected areas system. Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park sites are one of 19 protected areas in this ecosection, contributing minimally (1%) to the overall protected area representation of this ecosection. Sutherland River Provincial Park and Protected Area, Red Bluff Provincial Park, Torkelsen Lake Ecological Reserve, Stuart Lake Provincial Marine Park (three sites), Takla Lake Provincial Marine Park (three sites) Topley Provincial Park, Paarens Beach Provincial Park, Ethel F. Wilson Memorial Provincial Park and Sowchea Bay Provincial Park contribute the remaining 99 % of the protected area representation of this ecosection.
- Protects 154 hectares of SBSmc2 (Sub-boreal Spruce, moist cold subzone, Babine variant). This variant is well represented (13 %) in the protected area system; however, the park's contribution is minimal (less than 1 %) to the overall protected areas system representation of SBSmc2.
- Protects 256 hectares of SBSdk (Sub-boreal Spruce, dry cool subzone). This subzone is under-represented (5%) in the protected area system and the park's contribution is minimal (less than 1%).

Figure 1:
Regional Context Map



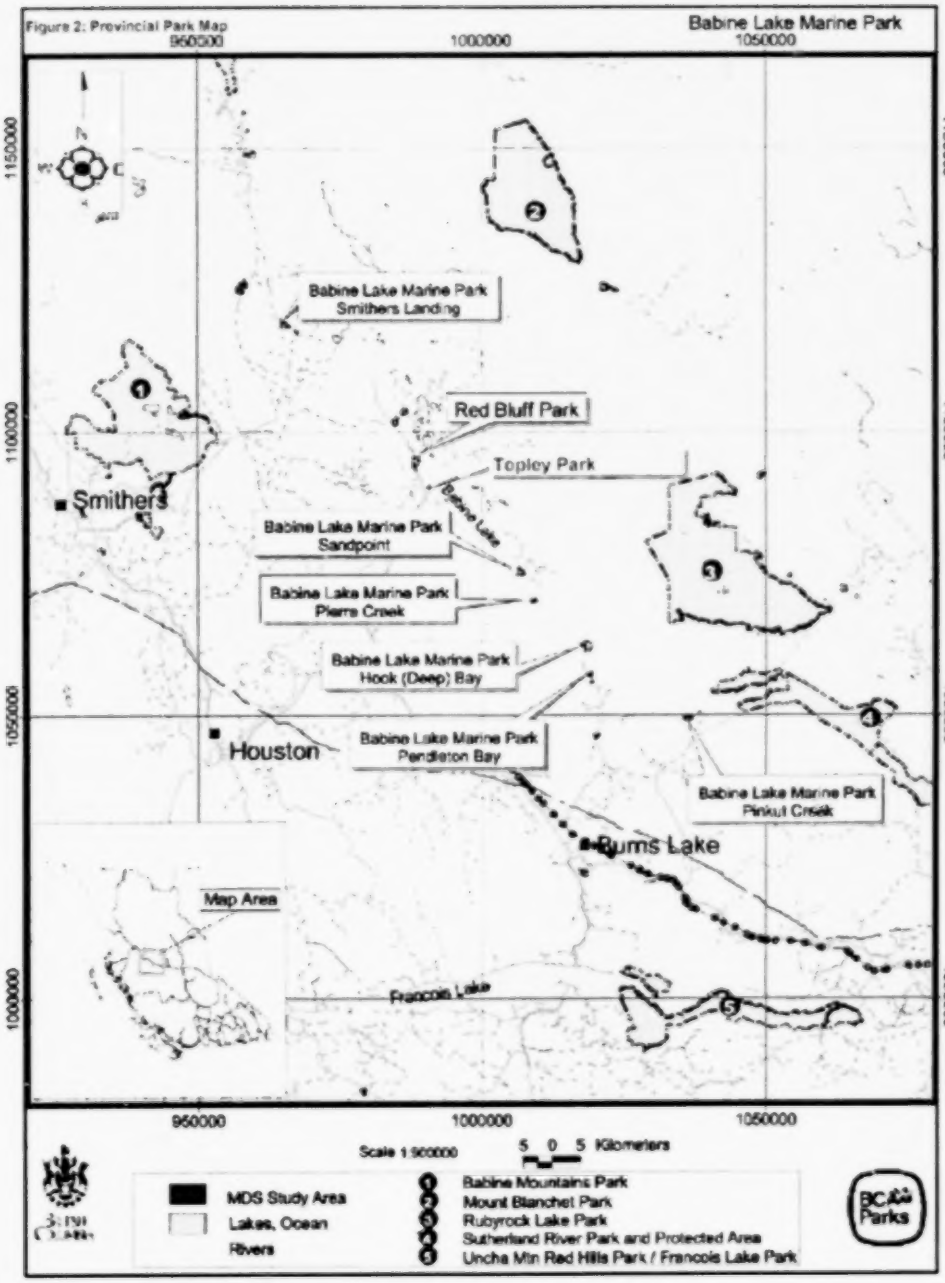


Figure 2: Provincial Park Map
Babine Lake Marine Park
960000
1000000
1050000
1150000
1100000
1050000
1000000
Babine Lake Marine Park
Smithers Landing
Red Bluff Park
Topley Park
Smithers
Babine Lake Marine Park
Sandpoint
Babine Lake Marine Park
Pierre Creek
Babine Lake Marine Park
Hook (Deep) Bay
Houston
Babine Lake Marine Park
Pendleton Bay
Babine Lake Marine Park
Pinkut Creek
Burns Lake
Map Area
Francois Lake
Scale 1:900000
5 0 5 Kilometers
MDS Study Area
Lakes, Ocean
Rivers
Babine Mountains Park
Mount Blanchet Park
Rubyrock Lake Park
Sutherland River Park and Protected Area
Uncha Mtn Red Hills Park / Francois Lake Park
BC Parks

Recreation and Tourism

- Provides access to internationally-significant angling opportunities for rainbow and lake trout along approximately 200 kilometres of waterways.
- Provides access to the Pinkut Creek fish hatchery which borders Pinkut Creek Site.
- Presents exceptional motor-boating and good flat-water canoeing and kayaking outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Contributes to the Lakes District tourism infrastructure through day-use, camping and boating outdoor recreation opportunities.

Commercial Business Opportunities

- Provides moderate commercial business opportunities for guided interpretation and educational tour groups attracted to the special features and outdoor recreation opportunities. Likely the best approach for this type of business opportunity is to develop it as part of a systems approach where several provincial parks, protected areas and Crown land areas along Babine Lake are included in the tour to give clients a broad and interesting program.

Cultural Heritage

- Babine Lake, as an important salmon migration route, had highly concentrated prehistoric occupation.
- More than 200 archaeological sites exist along Babine Lake.

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Protects remnant ecosystem within the Babine Upland Ecosection (a high priority, under-represented ecosection);
- Conservation values ranked as low; no sites contain rare or highly diverse cultural features.
- Provides access to internationally significant lake recreation opportunities for destination travellers and local residents, e.g. boating and angling.

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

All sites are accessible from Babine Lake. Pendleton Bay Site provides the only public boat launch on Babine Lake. Visitors can reach Pinkut Creek Site on the southwest shore of Babine Lake by driving a gravel logging road north of Burns Lake. Park users gain access to the Hook (Deep) Bay Site by using a trapline trail about one kilometre from road access.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

While trapline and guide-outfitting tenures cover the sites, none of the sites are used extensively (trappers have used the Hook (Deep) Bay Site in the past).

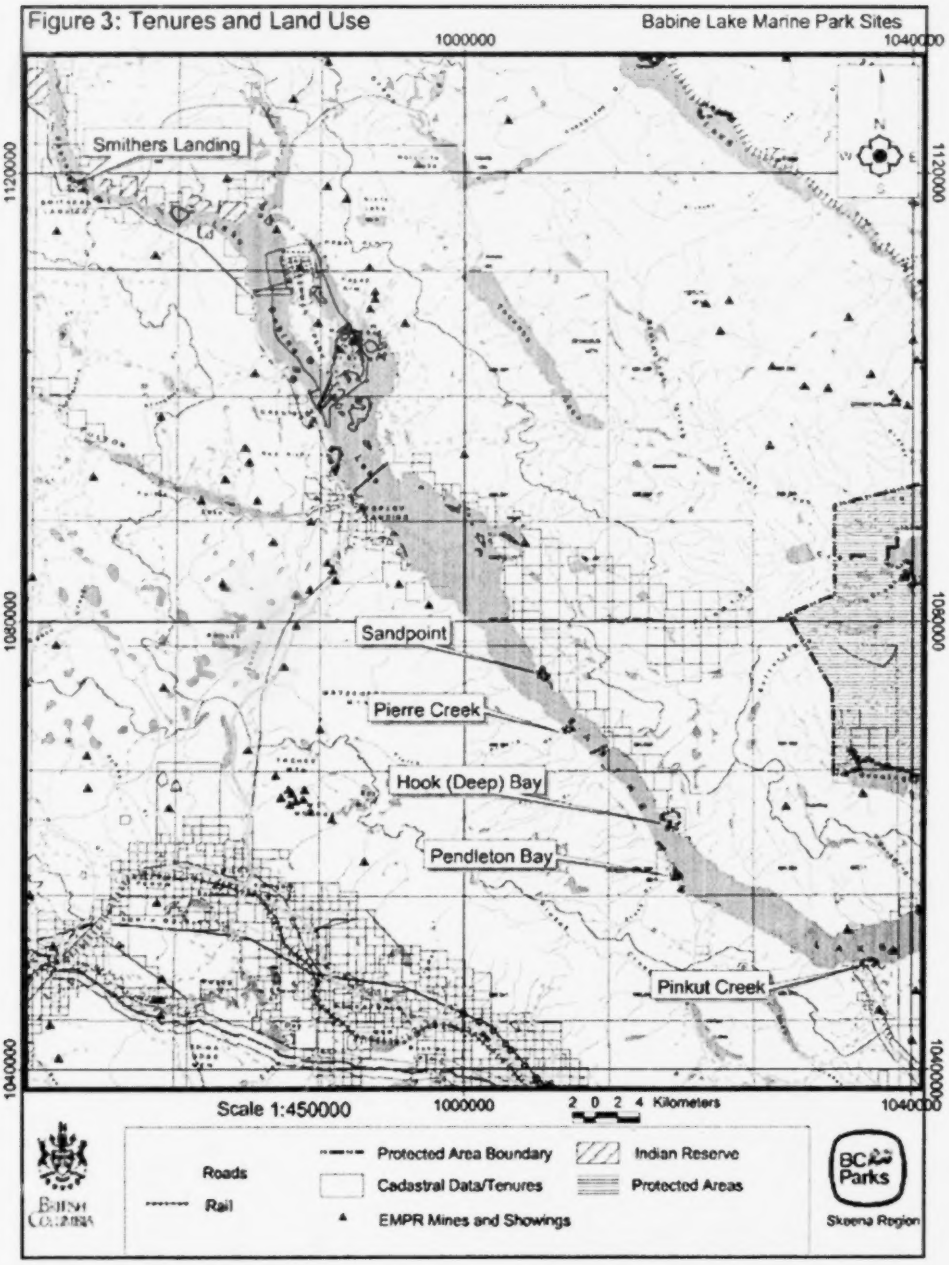


Figure 3: Tenures and Land Use
Babine Lake Marine Park Sites
1000000
1040000
1120000
1080000
1040000
Smithers Landing
Sandpoint
Pierre Creek
Hook (Deep) Bay
Pendleton Bay
Pinkut Creek
Scale 1:450000
2 0 2 4 Kilometers
Roads
Rail
Protected Area Boundary
Cadastral Data/Tenures
EMPR Mines and Showings
Indian Reserve
Protected Areas
BC Parks
Skeena Region

Figure 4 : Zoning

Babine Lake Marine - Hook (Deep) Bay

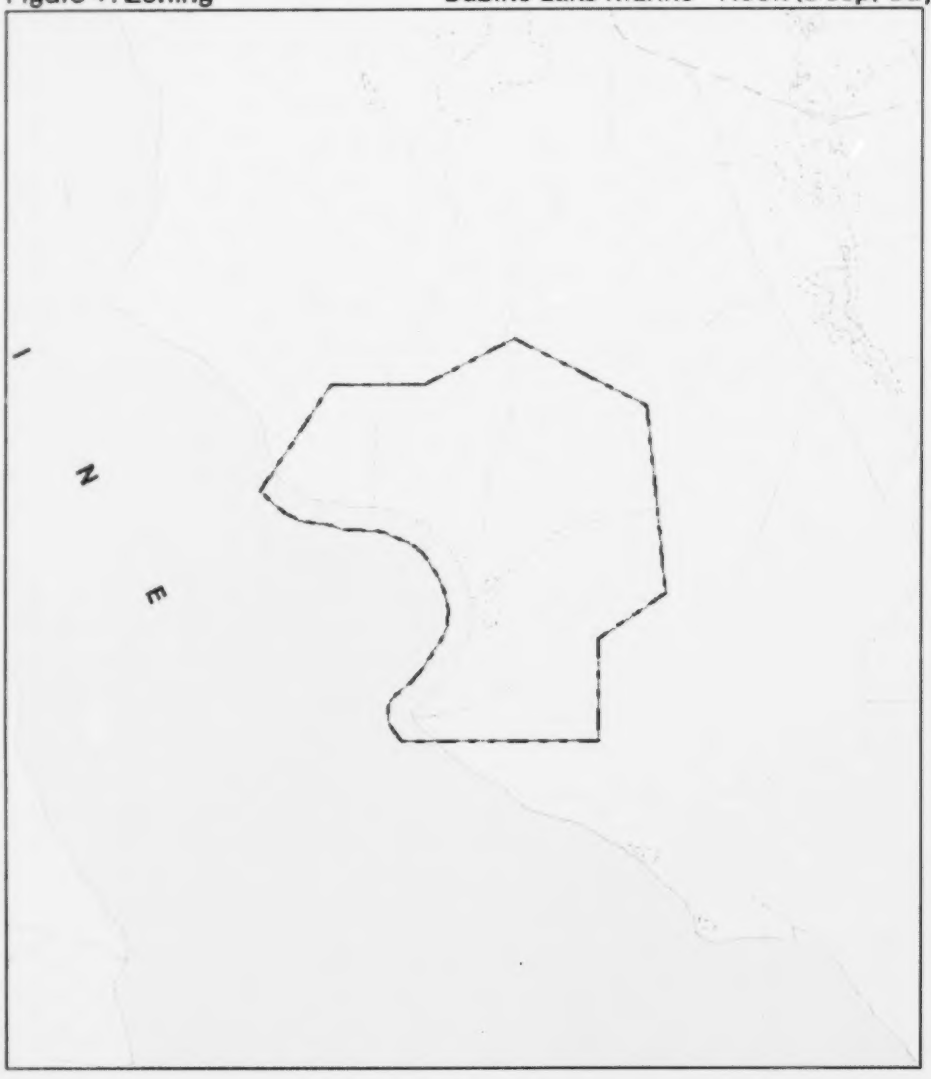


Figure 5 : Zoning

Babine Lake Marine - Pierre Creek

Projection: UTM Zone 10
Datum: NAD83

Natural Environment
Protected Area Boundary

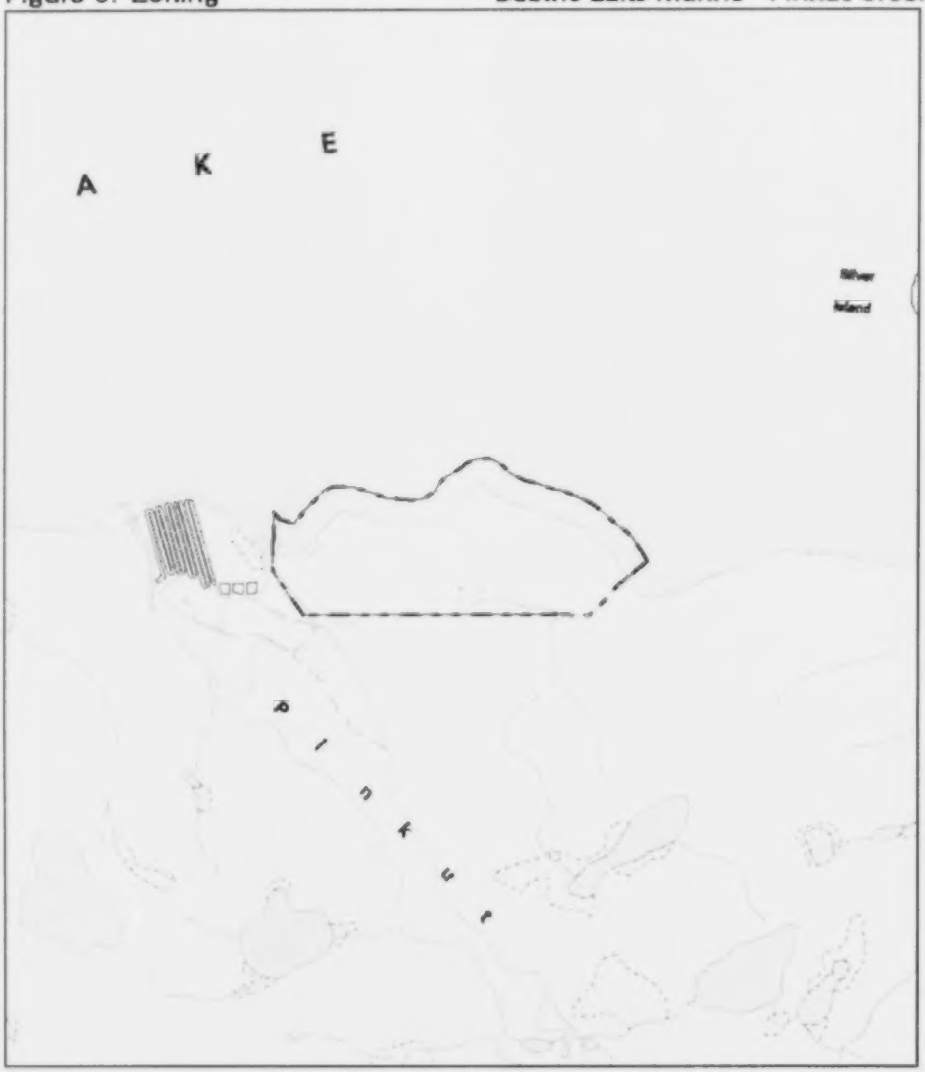
0 500
m

Produced in Jan 2003 for Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection

This is a visual representation only and should not be used for legal purposes.

Figure 6: Zoning

Babine Lake Marine - Pinkut Creek



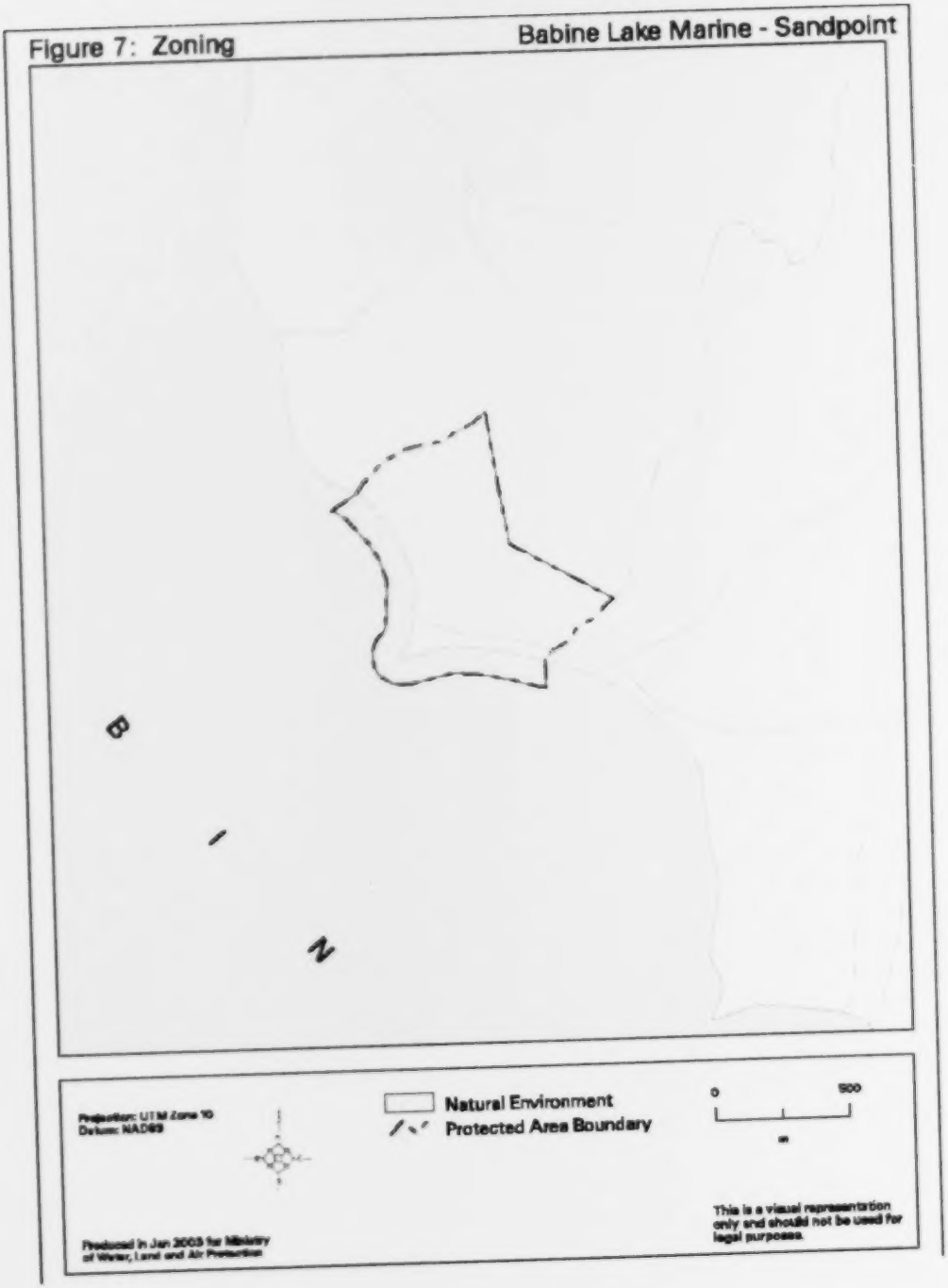


Figure 7: Zoning
Babine Lake Marine - Sandpoint
Natural Environment
Protected Area Boundary
0
500
m
This is a visual representation only and should not be used for legal purposes.

Existing Land Use Activities and Facilities

- Contains two fire rings and one picnic table at Sandpoint Site. Sandpoint Site once functioned as a log landing location. The site also contains a partially sheltered anchorage.
- Provides a sheltered bay with good anchorage and a beach at Hook (Deep) Bay Site. Hook (Deep) Bay Site contains no facilities. Park visitors use the site to hunt and picnic. The Nat'oot'en First Nation people used the site for a garden.

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

- The Hook (Deep) Bay and Sandpoint sites lie within a Special Resource Management Zone covering the northeast shore of Babine Lake. The Special Resource Management Zone focuses on the management of moose winter habitat within the Lakes District.
- Pinkut Creek Site lies within a Special Resource Management Zone designated with a recreation emphasis.
- Pierre Creek Site lies within a General Resource Management Zone.

First Nations Interests

- The Nat'oot'en First Nation, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council and Yekooche First Nation identified Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park within their asserted traditional territory.
- All First Nations have an interest in maintaining their aboriginal traditional uses and activities (i.e., trapping, hunting, fishing and gathering) in Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park.
- All First Nations have an interest in protecting cultural heritage and archaeological sites. First Nations do not want archaeological sites publicised because of potential vandalism.
- Nat'oot'en elders have an interest in re-establishing their gardens at Hook (Deep) Bay Site (also called "Garden Bay").

Other Agency Interests

- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has an interest in maintaining the fisheries values of Babine Lake and the Pinkut Creek fish hatchery.
- The Ministry of Water, Land Air Protection, Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section has an interest in wildlife and their habitats, particularly grizzly bear.
- The Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (British Columbia Conservation Data Centre (CDC)) has an interest in the species at risk in the Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park sites.

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Recreational users: boaters, anglers, picnickers, swimmers.
- Local residents and communities (e.g., Burns Lake, Topley, Houston, and small communities along Babine Lake) have an interest in the marine park sites as local outdoor recreation areas and conservation places.

- Trappers have an interest in the marine park sites because of their existing encumbrances on the marine park sites for trapping activities.
- Hunters have an interest in using All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) to gain access to Hook (Deep) Bay Site.

Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park (Hook (Deep) Bay, Pierre Creek, Pinkut Creek and Sandpoint sites) Role Statement

The primary role for the Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park sites is to provide regionally to provincially significant outdoor recreation opportunities for destination, transient and day use outdoor recreation activities. The four new sites added to Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park complement the two existing sites by providing important access to Babine Lake. Pendleton Bay Site provides camping, pic nicking, motor-boating, angling and cycling opportunities. Smithers Landing Site in the northwest part of Babine Lake offers similar outdoor recreation opportunities to Pendleton Bay with the exception of motor-boating. The Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park sites fulfil several Environmental Stewardship Division recreation goals, on both a regional and provincial basis, by providing facilities and services for:

- Lakeside destination camping for visitors to Babine Lake;
- Beach access and associated picnicking areas;
- Boat launch and parking facilities at Pendleton Bay Site to allow access to Babine Lake;
- Access to internationally significant angling opportunities;
- Panoramic views up the length of Babine Lake from most of the marine park sites; and,
- Potential for interpretation of First Nations and non-aboriginal cultural heritage themes.

The Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park sites protect small shoreline ecosystems within the Babine Upland Ecosection, an under-represented ecosection for protected areas. These small marine park sites provide protection for any rare and endangered plant and animal species and cultural heritage values that may exist.

Management Commitments and Issues

Direction from Previous Planning

In 2000, the Lakes District LRMP recommended the Babine Lake sites for protection because of their outdoor recreation and cultural heritage values. The LRMP does not provide specific management direction for the Babine Lake sites, but does provide general direction for all protected areas (See Appendix A of the Lakes District LRMP).

Management Issues

Environmental Stewardship Division identified the following management issues that require management attention:

Theme	Issue
Protecting the provincial marine park sites' natural values	• The flora and fauna of the four new sites are relatively unknown because inventory of these values is incomplete. • The potential for human and bear conflicts exists. Garbage is left in the marine park sites, attracting bears to the area. • Damage is occurring to Pinkut Creek Site's vegetation because of unauthorized camping and tree-cutting by park visitors. • Babine Lake fish populations, particularly lake trout, may be at risk because of increasing fishing pressure. • Hook (Deep) Bay Site's natural values may be at risk from hunters using ATVs to access the marine park site.
Protecting the provincial marine park sites' cultural heritage values	• Cultural heritage values in the four new sites are relatively unknown because inventory of these values is incomplete.
Addressing First Nations issues	• Hook (Deep) Bay Site's current natural and outdoor recreation values may be at low to moderate risk because Nat'oot'en elders would like to re-establish historic gardens in the site.
Protecting sufficient protected area sites along Babine Lake for the future	• Twin Creek and other sites previously rejected by the Lakes District LRMP have high potential for protected area status.

Management Direction

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

The following table describes management strategies to resolve identified management issues. In addition, Appendix 1 contains a table of acceptable activities, uses and facilities for the Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park sites.

Objective	Strategy
To add new sites to Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park	• Evaluate whether Twin Creek and/or other sites should be added to Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park.
To protect Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park's natural values	• Complete an inventory of flora and fauna with priority focused on plants and animals at risk. • Complete an inventory of fish and manage angling in cooperation with the Ministry of Water, Land Air Protection, Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section, as necessary. • Complete an inventory of grizzly bear in cooperation with the Ministry of Water, Land Air Protection, Skeena Region Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation Section, as necessary.

Objective	Strategy
	• Implement the Bear-People Conflict Prevention Plan for Parks and Protected Areas in British Columbia in all park sites; include the implementation of an education program. • Prepare a fire management plan
To respect First Nations values	• Do not advertise the existence or location of archaeological sites. • Collaborate with First Nations communities to protect archaeological sites, if damage occurs. • Work with the Nat'oot'en Nation regarding traditional activities and uses to ensure that park values are not compromised.
To protect Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park's cultural heritage values	• Investigate and collect existing information on cultural heritage values from the Nat'oot'en Nation and local citizen groups and individuals. • Consider creating a joint interpretive project on the history of aboriginal and non-aboriginal use of the Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park sites and surrounding Babine Lake area.
Provide information to the public about the park	• Consider developing a brochure for the entire Babine Lake system of provincial parks and protected areas. ➢ Include information on angling regulations, bear-human conflict prevention and water safety. • Develop an information sign program for Pinkut Creek. ➢ Include bear-human conflict information and prohibition on wood cutting. • Update the information about Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park on the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection official web site.
Bring existing commercial tenures under Park Use Permits	• Contact the trapline owners and guide-outfitters to place their trapping and hunting operations under Park Use Permits.

Consultation and Future Planning

The Environmental Stewardship Division will continue to consult with the appropriate First Nations representatives and with local stakeholders and adjacent resource users, as necessary. Environmental Stewardship Division considers Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park sites low priority for the development of a management plan with full public involvement.

Zoning Plan

Natural Environment Zone covers all four new sites within Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park.

Natural Environment Zone

Objective: To protect scenic values and to provide for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

Description: The four sites comprise 334 hectares of Natural Environment Zone.
Management Guidelines: Oriented to maintaining a natural environment and a high quality recreation experience. Visitor access may be restricted to preserve the recreation experience or to limit impacts. Separation of less compatible recreational activities and transportation modes. Designation of transportation may be necessary to avoid potential conflicts (e.g., horse trails, cycle paths, hiking trails).

Appendix 1. Babine Lake Marine Provincial Park (Hook (Deep) Bay, Pierre Creek, Pinkut Creek and Sandpoint) sites
Table of Acceptable Activities, Uses and Facilities

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Aboriginal traditional uses and activities	Y
Hunting	Y
Fishing	Y
Trapping	Y
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational gold panning/rock hounding	N
Utility corridors	N
Communication sites	N
Horse use/pack animals	N
Guide outfitting (hunting)	Y
Guide outfitting (fishing)	Y
Guide outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Guide outfitting (river rafting)	N
Cat-assisted skiing	N
Ski hills	N
Commercial recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility-based)	Y
Backcountry huts	N
Water control structures	N
Fish stocking and enhancement	N
Road access	Y (*to Pinkut Creek*)
Off-road access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road access (motorised)	N
Off-road access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorised water access	Y
Aircraft access	Y
Fire management (suppression)	Y
Fire management (prescribed fire management)	N
Fire management (prevention)	N
Forest insect/disease control	N1
Noxious weed control	N1
Exotic insect/disease control	N1
Scientific research (specimen collection)	M
Scientific research (manipulative activities)	M

Y = allowed subject to conditions identified in the management direction statement or management plan
M = may be permitted if compatible with protected area objectives
N = not allowed
N1 = allowed for expressed management purposes only
N2 = present and allowed to continue, but not normally allowed